

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, February 27, 2003, 7:45 a.m., Room 206, County-City Building, 555 South 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS AND OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Members: Jeff Searcy, Thomas Laging (departed at 9:02 a.m.), V.J. Nelson, Jim Hewitt, Karen Kilgarin (arrived at 8:20 a.m. and departed at 9:02), and Kim Todd (arrived at 8:24 a.m.)

Others: Lynn Johnson (Parks & Recreation), Scott Sullivan (Antelope Valley Design Team), Lori McClurg and Ken Fougeron (State of Nebraska DAS), Jeff Cole (Urban Development), Dennis Scheer and Jeff Chadwick (The Clark Enersen Architects), Ed Zimmer and Michele Abendroth (Planning Dept.)

STATED PURPOSE OF THE MEETING: Regular Meeting of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission

Mr. Searcy called the meeting to order at 7:49 a.m. He stated that the group would proceed with agenda item number 3 for discussion until a quorum arrived.

Update on design concepts for Antelope Creek bridges, especially J Street bridge at 24th Street

Scott Sullivan of Antelope Valley Design Team updated the Commission on the Antelope Creek bridges and stated that the O Street bridge has been identified as the “signature” bridge. The thought of the Antelope Valley Committee was that all of the bridges should relate in design, and the other bridges should be smaller versions of the O Street bridge. He noted that the consistent element of the design is the entry buttresses. The current design which has been accepted by the Antelope Valley Committee is a single span bridge with an entry buttress pylon at the four corners. Mr. Sullivan added that one discussion point for the J Street bridge is to possibly incorporate light fixtures similar to the capitol. Another part of the design that is still under discussion is the railing design.

Mr. Zimmer reiterated that the discussion from last month’s meeting is that the J street bridge should be a “cousin” to the other bridges and have some tie in to the capitol.

Mr. Sullivan stated that he would inform the committee of the progress.

Approval of meeting notes of January 23, 2003

Mr. Searcy called for a vote for the approval of the meeting notes of the January 23, 2003 meeting. Those members present were in unanimous agreement to approve the meeting notes as written.

Application by Geoff Childs for a Certificate of Appropriateness for Work at 1941 and 1945 K Street in the Capitol Environs District

Geoff Childs has applied to construct a four-plex apartment and a duplex at the southwest corner of 20th and K Streets. Mr. Zimmer stated that our guidelines would indicate two main issues. First, prior

demolition plans for the new development must be proposed, and he stated that they have easily met that. And secondly, the more remote you are from the capitol or the mall, the less stringent the standards. Mr. Zimmer stated that the requirement is that they fit in with the Neighborhood Design Standards, and he stated that he believed the designs meet that requirement. Mr. Zimmer's report thus recommended that the committee find that the proposal meets the requirements.

Mr. Laging asked if this meets the parking standard. Mr. Zimmer replied that it meets the minimum requirements. There are 24 bedrooms and 12 parking stalls, which meets the standard. Mr. Laging then asked if there was a landscaping standard as well. Mr. Zimmer stated that we can require landscaping.

Mr. Hewitt made a motion to approve the application, based on a finding that the project meets the neighborhood design standards and contributes to the overall character and quality of the Environs District, seconded by Ms. Todd. Hewitt, Todd, Kilgarin, Nelson, Laging and Searcy voting 'yes'.

Conceptual design for Lincoln Mall rejuvenation

Jeff Cole stated that this project is funded through the development of an office building on the former parking lot east of the City/County building, so the development of that building creates a funding mechanism through TIF that can be used for a needed rejuvenation of the Lincoln Mall. He added that Clark Enersen was selected as the design consultant. Urban Development is the funding agency, and Parks and Recreation will maintain the area.

Mr. Scheer stated that there is a rehab component in the design, but there is an opportunity to do more than rehab. He added that they are trying to impart some meaning, and they wanted to get the Commission's input on those issues. Mr. Scheer stated that their goal is to have some discussion today, and then in a month come back and talk about how to implement the ideas.

Mr. Scheer stated that at the west end, there is the young Lincoln sculpture, and at the east end, there is the mature Lincoln sculpture, which act as bookends to the mall. There are a number of bus shelters located along the mall. Mr. Scheer stated that Larry Worth from StarTran has indicated that the existing bus shelters could be removed and replaced.

Mr. Scheer also noted that they have talked to Public Works about the unsafe feeling that you have as a pedestrian crossing Eleventh Street, and Public Works indicated that they could plan to widen the curbs out and narrow the amount of street to cross as a pedestrian.

He also stated that one of the things that they wanted to do was to develop a screen on the north side of the 11th-12th block that incorporates both plant material and wall. He noted that there are buildings up and down the mall, and as they look at the rehab of the sidewalks, they wanted to add features that develop the entrances. He added that there is a good foundation.

Mr. Scheer stated that there are a couple themes to draw together, which are the history, life and political achievements of Lincoln, the man, and the history of Lincoln, the city, which started just two years after the death of Lincoln, the man.

Jeff Chadwick stated that one thing they talked about incorporating in the design was the chronological order of Lincoln's life and some of his more famous quotes. The other concept was to find ways to integrate the design of the penny in some way.

Mr. Chadwick noted that they wanted to find site-specific places to sit that had meaning. Mr. Scheer added that bench locations should be located where there is a view or where it imparts meaning at that location. Mr. Scheer stated that where the sidewalks intersect, the plan is to develop in the pavement a way-finding graphic. The sidewalks on the mall would remain concrete, but the corners would be developed in some other material.

Mr. Scheer stated that they do not want to overwhelm people as they walk up and down the mall, and they want it to be sophisticated and understated.

Mr. Searcy thanked Mr. Cole, Mr. Scheer and Mr. Chadwick for their time and presentation.

Ferguson House at 16th and H Streets in Capitol Environs District

Ken Fougeron stated that they have been struggling to find a tenant for the Ferguson House. The building has been vacant for the past year and a half or more and added that the future of that building is under consideration. He noted that they are at a crossroad and would like input from the Commission. Lori McClurg stated that it is a beautiful house, but it is not a great office space. Mr. Fougeron stated that they have explored many potential options, but have not been able to resolve what to do with the property. Mr. Hewitt stated that the building is not in good shape on the inside, and would take a lot of money to bring it up to date. Mr. Zimmer suggested looking in to it privatizing it with covenants and possibly using it as a bed and breakfast. He added that it is on the National Register of Historic Places. Ms. McClurg questioned the Commission on their thoughts of looking for a homeowner. Mr. Zimmer responded that he felt it was not inconceivable for a private owner. Mr. Searcy asked about the value of the property. Mr. Fougeron stated that an appraisal would have to be done. Mr. Zimmer also suggested the possibility of putting out RFPs and laying out specific guidelines. He added that the Preservation Association of Lincoln and the Near South Neighborhood Association would be interested in this discussion as well. Ms. McClurg stated that she would keep the Commission informed of the progress.

Staff Report/Miscellaneous

Mr. Zimmer stated that there was no further information to present.

Mr. Searcy stated that future meetings would be held at 7:45.

There being no further business, Mr. Searcy adjourned the meeting at 9:19 a.m.